

Press Release

**JUNE 8, 2005**

**SCHAKOWSKY COMMENDS ADVOCATE, LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR ON BILL TO BAN THE SALE OF WATER YO-YO BALLS**

**ILLINOIS FIRST IN THE NATION TO BAN SALES OF TOY THAT HAS INJURED HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN**

**WASHINGTON, DC -- Representative Jan Schakowsky, the Ranking Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection, today released a statement commending the efforts of advocate Lisa Lipin, Sen. Jeffrey Schoenberg and Rep. Elizabeth Coulson, and Gov. Rod Blagojevich for their efforts on behalf of SB 1960, a bill that will ban the sale of water yo-yo balls in Illinois. Gov. Rod Blagojevich will sign this bill into law today.**

**Rep. Schakowsky's full statement is below:**

**"Today's signing of SB 1960, which will ban the sale of yo-yo water balls in the state of Illinois, is a tribute to the tireless advocacy of Lisa Lipin whose son, Andrew, was injured by a yo-yo ball nearly two years ago. It is no surprise that Illinois is the first state to ban the sale of this dangerous product that has injured over 400 children to date. Ms. Lipin has single-handedly brought the danger of the yo-yo ball to the attention of parents, stores, the media, and legislators. We all owe Ms. Lipin many thanks. I would also like to thank State Senators Jeffrey Schoenberg and Carol Ronen and Representative Elizabeth Coulson for introducing and sheparding SB 1960 through the Illinois General Assembly. Your work will help prevent future injuries and could truly save children's lives. And Governor Blagojevich should be commended for his decision to sign this important measure into law.**

**The injuries to children caused by the seemingly harmless yo-yo ball are shocking. Some children have lost consciousness due to strangulation. Others have suffered from concussions and skull fractures. A number have sustained permanent eye injuries. I**

believe that it is important to get yo-yo balls out of stores and homes before a child dies.

Parents across the country buy toys and other products for their children, assuming that because they are on the shelves, they are safe. A 1999 Coalition for Consumer Rights' survey in Illinois found that 75-percent of adults believe that the government oversees pre-market testing for children's products; 79-percent believe that manufacturers are required to test the safety of those products before they are sold. For most products, neither is true.

In fact, there are no mandatory safety standards for the majority of the children's products being sold today. Congress passed legislation in 1981 that prohibits the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the agency that oversees product safety, from establishing mandatory standards in most cases. The few standards that are in place are set by the very industries looking to make profits and they are also expected to police themselves.

Because the fox is guarding the henhouse, too many unsafe children's products are on the shelves, in homes, and in daycare centers. And, once they are on the shelves and in homes, getting the CPSC to act to remove them is nearly impossible. Despite knowing that over 400 serious injuries have resulted from the yo-yo ball, all CPSC has done is issue a warning. Instead of a culture of consumer protection, it seems the CPSC - the very agency charged with ensuring product and consumer safety - has a culture of caution and delay. Is the CPSC waiting for a child to die before taking real action? Thankfully, Illinois is not.

Since the CPSC has refused to act, Representative Rob Andrews (D-NJ) and I will be reintroducing a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives to establish a national ban of the yo-yo ball. We believe that children in every state should be protected from this so-called toy and will continue to work to pass our legislation.

Again, I would like to thank everyone whose work has made the ban of the yo-yo ball in Illinois a reality. You are sending a strong message that Illinois is committed to the safety of our children and letting manufacturers know that we do not want the yo-yo ball - or another life-threatening children's product- on the market."